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THE ADVENTURE OF DONCOR CLANK UPTHINGDOWN:
AN ADULT FAIRY TALE

(From: LIFE SONG ANTHOLOGY)

Clint Could

I am not human. I am an animal. I'm not sure what kind of an animal that I am, but I am certain that the term applied to me is "animal." I have seen numerous creatures, hiding behind fancy disguises, prowling around this world. Many of these creatures have characteristics quite similar to mine, often quite frighteningly so. I can't remember from where or when I became or "arrived," but the fact that I exist, perhaps to mortals--"persist." It seems humans prefer me to be that type of domesticated bestial organism called a "pet," rather than an intelligent companion or friend. After all, I do think I think rather well and, perhaps, a degree philosophical. Due to this slight human miscalculation, I am forced to deduce that I am, alas, an animal.

I do prefer to tramp around the countryside upon my four, appropriately delegated, legs, rather than journey, uncomfortably, on two legs. Upon two legs, in such a horizontal erection, I am the comic doomed for catastrophe. My head can extend to any noose that man might decide to suspend from trees or other peculiar limits; this, then, can cause a bit of a problem. When I am on all "fours", I can, at least, hop around and over nets and other gimmicks that these half-witted hunter

lay about.

Animals have to play; I have my fun. I make fun of other animals. This is only natural, because humans ridicule me. It is fun too, as I know my own hypocrisy. I like to run. I love to run. Animals like to run and stalk, and run and attack, and run and laugh. I'm no different.

Man has long been inclined to feel the need to own a pet. They chased me for a long time and eventually one man, having the greatest of luck, perchanced to capture me. I shall not explain the details of my arresting experience, as the memory is distressing, not only humiliating; I lost. The man, who was to be my master, beamed; that was some consolation. I knew life couldn't be all gloom ahead.

I became his pet. He seemed proud of me, too; I was proud of my master. He would smile and we would play together---run and hide and run again. He would also feed me on time, or at least, when he didn't have one of his moods. My master had the moodiest existence, perhaps, that is why we got along so well; our moods matched our temper, and the temper our stomachs. When my master was perturbed about something, he would pout and then snarl. If he snarled my way, I would snarl back. I don't know whether he appreciated my retaliation. After a few snarls upon my part, I spent the evening under the pleasant stars, the only inconvenience being that it was in mid-December. I learned. I never found it necessary to snarl or snap at my master.

On some evenings, he would talk with me and ask me my opinion. My communication was lacking. I understood though and he seemed to see that I did. We were more than animal and man. We were pals.

I do bite. I have never bitten a human yet. There is one woman, who lives next door and sulks behind closed drapes. I heard her, one day, complaining to my master. She had the gall to imply that I had invaded her garbage can and strewn the contents across her yard. I had done nothing of the sort. The audacity to insinuate such a thing! I knew then that I would be sulking behind one of those cans the next time she made a visit. That was a fine dream: The Mad Sulker strikes again! But the woman moved before I had a chance. This was for best I imagine.

One evening, late in March, my master returned home with another animal. I was astonished. Not only hurt, I felt that I was not needed any more. I often wonder if animals can feel that need? Am I different? I went out for a walk that evening never to return there again. He could keep that mutt, that simple, plain, ordinary--that "dog!"

I wandered about town for a few days. I didn't feel hungry anymore and I didn't have that old urge. I just couldn't kill my own dinner. I have a heart. I tried to decide what prompted my master to bring home another pet. I thought we were pals. I spent another hunger-riddled-sleepless night and decided that I had to go home. I was, after all, dependent. It was a

devastating blow, the loss of virginity (that is to say--the fall into domesticity). I had to discover a plan. I knew my master was too proud to just take me back. I had to make him want me, perhaps, make him need me. I tried to think of what he thought of me. Did he want me back? Did he like me? Would he come after me? Perhaps, it would be better if I live alone; life of adventure. Again? Then I thought of a way. I remember the day I bathed in the city pool, which really wasn't a pool but a landmark fountain, and I knew how to get home, accompanied by a police officer. How delightful!

I trotted over to the fountain. I felt a new vitality grip me. It overwhelmed me and I was going home. I climbed into the water and headed directly for the center piece. The saturated glob of a statue rested in an upright position with cascading streams from the marble brow. The brow being the thick skull of the Honorable Miss Thelma Switheringspoon, Town Mayor of 1802 (to my utter disgust, she hated animals). I knew that I could kill two birds with one stone, to employ that old cliché. I sat (up to my hairless) in freezing water. I seemed to ignore the season, but I knew that my master would soon come for me. I howled and hooed, and splashed and scraped and no one paid me any attention. After hours, I began to feel somewhat dejected. It was getting cold. Finally I knew that I would have to do something fierce. I saw an old lady and I growled at her. She stopped. She looked. I made a grotesque face. She didn't seem disturbed. I quickly made "uglies" that

I had never even thought possible before. She was still placid. That was insulting. She laughed. That called for violence. I gulped up a mouth full of Switheringspoon liquid and spritzed it out (in a grander cascade than the lady herself) toward the old witch peering at me from beyond the fringe. She howled. (I discovered something that humans had in common with animals). I reached for another mouthful but she had alighted her broom and zoomed away. She hovered momentarily, I grimaced--she screamed, and I knew that I was saved. She returned within minutes accompanied by a police officer. How delightful! I wasn't going to give up without some struggle. I snarled and snapped. The officer reached into the water. I snapped again. He didn't flinch. I didn't want to hurt him; he was pressing his luck, though. I couldn't bite him. He rolled up his pants and waded into the pool. He jerked me up so swiftly that I didn't even manage a yelp. I was then passed into rough hands that bounced me into a netted truck. They whizzed off. I was shivering in the open van behind. They placed me among sick looking derelicts and other species of mammalia. I frowned. I realized my attempt was in vain. I would spend the rest of my life in a cage. I thought of the stories that other animals had told me. Stories that would make my hair bristle. I remember the story about the antelope family whose young daughter had been killed and eaten by savages. I was horrified. To think that she had been eaten--devoured by "savages!" After spending three very miserable nights in the morgue, I had an

unexpected visitor. Rumor had it that a strange fellow had been seized swimming about the city fountain and threatening old maids (that wasn't exactly the terminology). He was a photographer-reporter. Then I heard a familiar voice. Yes, it was my master. I saw him; he looked worse than me. Upon seeing me, he exclaimed: "Clank!"

Somehow I felt different again--somehow I felt isolated from these other animals. Had I developed a sense of belongingness? A sense of loyalty? Then on the other hand--survival. Perhaps, I was all wrong?

I just looked up at my master. He looked down at me, but it didn't feel as if he were looking down, but as if he were looking across--I knew then I was going home--We were pals! Why he came puzzled me; worried me, then. He smiled. I knew the answer then, and together we walked away.